

FBI Laboratory Practices for Shipping and Returning Evidence

1 Purpose

These practices establish the requirements for shipping and returning evidence to conform to the requirements of the FBI Laboratory Quality Assurance Manual and the applicable accrediting body(ies).

2 Scope

These practices apply to FBI Laboratory personnel who ship and return evidence to appropriate parties. These practices also apply to FBI Laboratory personnel who ship evidence between FBI Laboratory facilities.

3 Practices

Personnel preparing evidence for shipment will account for all items and ensure the evidence is returned in a timely manner unless it is destroyed according to existing regulations, is retained by the FBI Laboratory, or shipped to another FBI facility for examination. Evidence will not be shipped through internal FBI mail (i.e., Bumail). Evidence will not be shipped on Fridays or over holidays except in exigent circumstances. Personnel who have identified evidence that will be sent to an external laboratory for examinations will be responsible for packing and shipping evidence to that laboratory. Evidence received electronically (e.g., email attachments, evidence serialized in Sentinel by FBI contributors and retrieved by Laboratory personnel for examination) will be retained.

3.1 Packaging Evidence for Shipment

3.1.1 Personnel preparing evidence for shipment will locate all evidence that needs to be shipped for a particular case and re-inventory the evidence against the evidence listing.

Personnel will cross-check the Laboratory number(s), item identifiers or numbers, and contributor identifiers (e.g., 1B number) on the records and the evidence.

3.1.2 Personnel will package all evidence in a properly sealed evidence container and in a manner to prevent damage under normal shipping conditions. Personnel will ensure evidence packaging is labeled with the Laboratory number, item identifiers, container, and packaging designations. When possible, personnel will repackage evidence in contributor containers with contributor identifiers (e.g., 1B numbers, barcodes). The shipping records will be placed so they are not in direct contact with the evidence and can be easily retrieved.

3.1.3 When returning evidence to an FBI field office or resident agency, the package(s) will be addressed to the attention of evidence control in the receiving office. **Redacted**

3.1.4 When returning evidence to an external contributor, the package(s) will be addressed according to the incoming request for examination.

3.1.5 Evidence may be shipped to a different person and/or facility upon request from the contributor. This request will be recorded on the appropriate communication log (e.g., *Activity and Communication Log* [7-245], Case Communication Log). If the request is received in a letter, a fax, or an email, the request will be retained in the Forensic Advantage (FA) Case Object Repository, Case Communication Log Object Repository, or in the 1A for legacy cases.

3.1.6 For evidence that was personally delivered to the FBI Laboratory, the contributor will be contacted to determine if they will pick up the evidence, when necessary. This communication will be recorded on the appropriate communication log (e.g., *Activity and Communication Log*, Case Communication Log).

3.2 Shipping Records

3.2.1 Shipping Invoice

3.2.1.1 An *FBI Laboratory Shipping Invoice* (7-264, 7-264 LIMS) (Appendix A, Appendix B) will be generated for at least each shipment and may be generated for each shipping container within that shipment. A copy of each *FBI Laboratory Shipping Invoice* will be retained in the FBI Laboratory file. For FA cases, the copy will be uploaded into the Case Object Repository.

3.2.1.2 Personnel preparing evidence for shipment will place the *FBI Laboratory Shipping Invoice* in an envelope labeled "Invoice" and include it in the shipment. If not included on the *FBI Laboratory Shipping Invoice*, a detailed description of the enclosed item(s) will also be enclosed. For legacy cases, this will typically be a copy of the *Laboratory Work Sheet* (7-2).

3.2.2 Secondary Evidence Log

When secondary evidence is shipped, a copy of the secondary evidence log will be enclosed in the envelope labeled "Invoice."

3.3 Chain-of-Custody Records

3.3.1 Chain-of-Custody Log

Transfers of evidence for shipping purposes will be recorded on the appropriate Chain-of-Custody Log.

3.4 Selecting a Carrier for Shipping Evidence

When choosing a carrier, it is essential that personnel preparing evidence for shipment are aware of each carrier's limitations for shipment, including requirements for shipping oversized evidence, overweight evidence, or hazardous material evidence. The limitations are available from carriers. When practicable, personnel preparing evidence for shipment will use a trackable carrier.

3.4.1 Hazardous Material Evidence

Any submissions containing materials defined as hazardous by the Department of Transportation (DOT) must be returned by personnel who have been trained to ship packages containing hazardous materials by a certified Department of Transportation or International Air Transport Association-approved school. DOT defines hazardous materials as materials that in shipment pose risk to health, safety, and property. The materials are classified as being explosive, toxic, flammable, oxidizing, radioactive, or corrosive. Examples of hazardous materials include ammunition, lighters, lithium batteries, pressurized containers, matches, and chlorine. For assistance in determining whether items must be treated as hazardous material evidence, personnel will contact appropriately trained personnel or Evidence Management Unit personnel.

3.5 Returning Evidence to a Contributor

3.5.1 Contributor within the United States

When shipping evidence within the United States, including territories, personnel preparing evidence for shipment will ensure the evidence is shipped using a courier or an appropriate, trackable carrier, when practicable.

3.5.2 External Contributor outside the United States

Personnel preparing evidence for shipment should seek the assistance of an appropriately trained person when sending evidence outside the United States as this may result in the container being opened and inspected by customs officials.

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3.5.4 Direct Return to a Contributor

Personnel returning evidence directly to a contributor will record a hand-to-hand transfer on the appropriate Chain-of-Custody Log. For FA cases, personnel will ensure the contributor signs the FA Evidence Return Receipt using the electronic signature pad, and upload the Evidence Return Receipt to the FA Case Object Repository.

3.6 Shipping Evidence Between FBI Laboratory Facilities

Evidence shipped between FBI Laboratory facilities will be properly sealed. Personnel preparing evidence for shipment will locate all evidence that needs to be shipped for a particular case and re-inventory the evidence against the evidence listing. An *FBI Laboratory Shipping Invoice* will be generated for at least each shipment and may be generated for each shipping container. A copy of each *FBI Laboratory Shipping Invoice* will be retained in the FBI Laboratory file. For FA cases, the copy will be uploaded into the FA Case Object Repository.

3.7 Misdirected Evidence

If it is determined that evidence was shipped to the wrong location, it must be reported to the Quality Manager in writing. The Quality Manager will address the issue in accordance with the Laboratory Operations Manual - Practices for Addressing a Nonconformity. The evidence will be sent to the correct location, either by being returned to the FBI Laboratory or by the FBI Laboratory requesting confirmation that the evidence has been forwarded from the incorrect location to the correct one (e.g., shipping receipt). All activities to resolve the misdirection of the evidence will be recorded in the appropriate communication log (e.g., *Activity and Communication Log*, Case Communication Log).

4 Records

The following records will be generated and/or retained in the FBI Laboratory file as a result of these practices:

- Appropriate Chain-of-Custody Log.
- *FBI Laboratory Shipping Invoice*.
- Secondary evidence log, if generated.
- *Laboratory Work Sheet* (for legacy cases).
- Appropriate communication log.

5 References

FBI Laboratory Quality Assurance Manual, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Laboratory Division, latest revision.

FBI Laboratory Operations Manual, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Laboratory Division, latest

revision.

ISO/IEC 17025 - General Requirements for the Competence of Testing and Calibration Laboratories, International Organization for Standardization, Geneva, Switzerland, 20017.

ISO/IEC 17025:2017 - Forensic Science Testing and Calibration Laboratories Accreditation Requirements (AR 3125), ANAB, Milwaukee, WI, April 29, 2019.

Rev. #	Issue Date	History
8	06/03/19	Revised terminology in section 3 to refer to an external laboratory. In section 3.1.5 added reference to the Case Communication Log Object Repository. Modified section 3.1.6 to allow for instances when the contributor doesn't need to be contacted. Changed evidence management personnel to Evidence Management Unit in section 3.4.1. Updated list of references in section 5. Updated image of Shipping Invoice in Appendix B to reflect addition of portion marking.
9	12/21/20	Minor edits throughout for clarity. 5 – added LOM

Approval

Redacted - Signatures on File

Laboratory Director

Date: 12/18/2020

Quality Manager

Date: 12/18/2020

Appendix A: *FBI Laboratory Shipping Invoice (7-264)*

Redacted - Form on File

Appendix B: *FBI Laboratory Shipping Invoice (7-264 LIMS)*

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